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# HEINRICH LEBERECHT FLEISCHER,

BY

PROF. A. MÜLLER, PH. D.

FROM THE SMITHSONIAN REPORT FOR 1889.

WASHINGTON:
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# MEMOIR OF HEINRICH LEBERECHT FLEISCHER.*

By Prof. A. Müller, Ph. D.

Translated by Miss Henrietta Szold.

Were it desirable to single out the rarest and most admirable among the many fine qualities of the great and good scholar to whose memory these lines are devoted, I should not hesitate to name the perfect self-denial which at all times prompted him to place his unparallelled attainments at the disposal of others. Among German orientalists (if Assyriologists be excepted), few will be found who have not profited by his unselfishness; and abroad likewise there are many who are similarly indebted. We all knew where to seek when our meager stores were on the point of giving out, and we stood in need of the gifts with which his treasure-houses were abundantly filled. In dispensing these to great and small, he was untiring, generous, and impartial as God's sun which shines upon the just and the unjust alike. More than a year has passed since his hand has grown numb and his eye dim, but where do they linger who should have hastened to his grave, and wreathed with tributes of gratitude the hillock which nature, slow though her processes are, has twice decked with fresh verdure? I blame, I accuse no one. Many a shrinking soul hides its gratitude in reverential silence rather than parade fine and tender feelings in the market-place. Doubtless there are others who reluctantly find themselves forced by the cares of existence, by daily new burthensome tasks, to deny themselves the fulfillment of a warmly cherished desire. And most probably there are still others, here and there, who, like the writer of these words, are even now, after unavoidable delay, on the point of paying the long-planned tribute of piety. Nevertheless it remains a sad fact that, with the exception of the somewhat business-like though not unsympathetic announcements of the French Institute and of the Bavarian Academy, the brief remarks, accompanying an excellent portrait of Fleischer in the Leipzig *Illustrirte Zeitung*, an article in the *New York Times*, and a barren notice in the London *Athenæum*, only two attempts have up to this time been made to give adequate and becoming treatment to the work of this distinguished scholar: Thorbecke's sketch in the Journal of the German

* From Bezzenberger's *Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen*, Göttingen, 1889, vol. xv, pp. 319–337.



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Oriental Society, and the more extended memorial address by Goldziher before the Hungarian Academy. Indeed it will ever be humiliating to German orientalists, that although more than a year has elapsed since Fleischer's death, the only searching analysis published of his great activity as a scholar and a teacher (and such Goldziher's* essay obviously is), has been written by an Hungarian in his native language, with which no one of us is conversant.

In fact, the number is not very great of those who may without presumption undertake an exhaustive treatment of the life of so distinguished a scholar. I am far from counting myself among that number, but I believe I have learned enough to enable me to appreciate to a certain extent the great ability of him who acquired such vast learning by means of his own exertions; and I trust I have sufficient judgment to designate at least approximately the rank and position due my deceased teacher in the history of our science. Precisely here I can not permit the motive of modesty to hinder me from attempting this task, for the reader who is interested in the science of Indo-European languages may justly wish to gain an idea of the general attitude of a scholar whose investigations border upon his own sphere. That my task also involves the duty of pointing out the natural limitations of his activity shall not hinder me from carrying out my intention. Next to unselfishness, Fleischer's most prominent trait as a scholar was his love of truth. He himself would be the first to censure me if I were to sketch his personality in white on a white back-ground, according to the latest fashion among painters. Admiration without criticism is valueless. If, feeling the former, I venture to use the latter, no one may charge me with presumptuousness. He is a poor master who trains disciples bereft of the critical faculty; a poor disciple he who leans unquestioningly upon the authority of even a deeply-revered master. I must however refrain from giving a detailed description of the purely human side of his being and life, incomplete though his picture will thus remain. I consider it improper to forestall a full presentation by one more qualified for this task, who can base his assertions upon intimate acquaintance with all the incidents and relations of his private life. I shall confine myself to outlines, the data for which I owe to the kindness of Prof. Dr. Curt Fleischer, of Meissen. They thus may claim reliability on those points in which they disagree with statements published elsewhere.

Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer was born at Schandau on February 21, 1801. His father, Johann Gottfried Fleischer, an officer in the custom-service, died at the age of eighty-nine, on August 24, 1860, at Pirna, enjoying at that time a pension as inspector of customs. His mother, whom he lost as early as August 10, 1825, was the daughter of the

*Emlékbeszéd Fleischer Leberecht Henrik a M. Tud. Akadémia külfagja felett. Goldziher Ignácz (a Magy. Tud. Ak. elhúnyt tagjai fölött tarttot emlékbeszédek. Vköt. 4. szám). Budapest, M. T. Ak., 1889, 44 p., 8.

parish schoolmaster Unruh, at Prietitz, near Pulsnitz. At Schandau the boy attended the public school, where his talents soon attracted the attention of the principal, Edelmann, who undertook to teach young Fleischer the elements of Latin. Thus his father was enabled to enter him in 1814, as a student at the high-school in Bautzen, where he remained until 1819. Here he was instructed in Hebrew, thus for the first time coming in contact with the Orient. When next he became interested in an Eastern subject it was by chance, and it decided his whole future career. He accidentally found among the wrapping-paper of a cheese-dealer at market sheets of an Arabic grammar, to the study of which he at once applied himself. He became so deeply interested that when he entered upon his course in the University of Leipzig at Easter, 1819, he not only did not neglect his theological pursuits, nor fail to devote himself under the guidance of Gottfried Hermann to classical studies, but he also indulged his love for Orientalia. In fact, after having passed with distinction a theological examination, he spent one more year in the exclusive study of Oriental languages. He soon arrived at the conviction that it was necessary for him to be at Paris with De Sacy. By the assistance of a young French merchant named Bernard, with whom he had become acquainted, he succeeded in obtaining a position as tutor in the household of Mons. de Caulaincourt (under Napoleon Duke of Vicenza). On March 4, he received his degree, and on April 18, he began his journey to Paris. For one year and a half he was in Caulaincourt's house. Later he lived alone, earning a livelihood by giving private lessons. But during the whole time he was zealously occupied with his studies under De Sacy, paying particular attention to Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. The impression made upon him by the great French savant was never obliterated,—neither by the work, nor the success, nor the honors with which his long life was replete. He continued to pay the tribute of love and esteem to his master long after he himself had come to be looked upon as the master Arabist. At the same time he made diligent use of the valuable manuscripts in the library. Thus, the first essay published by him was a review, in the *Journal Asiatique* of 1827, of the first volume of Habicht's edition of the Thousand and One Nights, based upon Galland's manuscript. His editions of Abulfeda and Beidhawi, as well as the essay, *De glossis Habichtianis*, all published later on, are also proofs of his industry in gathering material while at Paris. At the same time he sought the society of Orientals, especially of two Egyptians, a Mohammedan—Refâ'a, and a Christian—Aydé, both mentioned *honoris causa* in the above-named essay. Although the article in the *Journal Asiatique* shows that he was a ripe scholar at that time, he continued to devote himself after his return, in 1828, to private study, partly at his own home and partly at Dresden, where he catalogued the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts in the royal library. The catalogue was published at Leipzig in 1831; likewise, his edition and translation of Abulfeda's *Historia ante-islamica*.

Both publications proved that he had reached the goal which he had been pursuing during a twelve years' preparatory period, entailing constant hard work and manifold sacrifices. In the preface to Abulfeda he deplores the fewness of his notes, and craves indulgence for himself on the plea of being a *homo lectionis paucæ, memoriæ paucioris, otii paucissimi.* But the character of his work is such as to invalidate all but the last of the three excuses. Meantime he had accepted in 1831, a position as teacher in the Kreuz high-school at Dresden. Here he remained until 1835, when, the above-mentioned works having spread his fame, he was offered a professorship at St. Petersburg, later filled by Dorn. He was about to leave for Russia, when, in the nick of time, the offer of a full professorship of Oriental languages, at his own university of Leipzig, reached him. He was elected on October 19, 1835, but did not enter upon the duties of his position until Easter, 1836. At first he was considered a member of the theological faculty, but early in the next decade he was permitted, after active agitation on his own part, to pass over to the philosophical faculty. On September 27, 1836, he married Ernestine Mathilde Jässing, of Bautzen, the daughter of Friedrich Leberecht Jässing, retired brigade judge of the royal Saxon service, who lived at that time in Dresden. He was permitted to celebrate, with his faithful and affectionate wife, who still survives, the fiftieth anniversary of his wedding-day, and was blessed with the joy—marred only by the death of their eldest daughter—of seeing their children occupy positions of honor in the community. Not less happy was his domestic life, than were his official and scientific undertakings. When, in 1846, the Royal Saxon Scientific Society was founded, he at once became an active member. In 1855, he became its assistant secretary, and later, secretary in chief, a position which he filled with his customary scrupulousness until 1883. In 1860, he received an honorable call from Berlin. He refused the offer, remaining faithful to his native land until his death.

When Fleischer entered upon his professorship in Leipzig, in 1836, Arabic-Mohammedan studies had begun to flourish in all parts of Germany. Between 1819 and 1829 there had been published five of the *Mo'allaqât*, with the scholia of Zauzanî, by Kosegarten, Hengstenberg, Rosenmüller, and Vullers; in 1828, the text of the *Hamâsa*, by Freytag; between 1825 and 1831, the first six volumes of Habicht's Thousand and One Nights; and in 1828, Kosegarten's *Chrestomathy;* Freytag's Arabic Poetics (1830), and the first volume of his great lexicon (1830), as well as the beginning of Ewald's *Grammatica critica* (1831), had established the principle that the edition of texts should be prepared with due regard to the laws of the language. Meantime another German scholar—Frähn, in the service of the Russian Government, by his *Recensio* (1826), had laid a scientific foundation for Islamic numismatics. Dorn was beginning to assist the Petersburg investigator, and Hammer-Purgstall, unflagging, continued his magnificent work at Vienna. The

last-mentioned scholars prove that the increased interest in Arabic subjects can not be traced entirely to outward causes, but should be connected with the renascence in Germany of philological studies from an historical point of view. On the other hand, the efforts of the first set of scholars depend entirely upon the work of De Sacy, who had been the teacher of Kosegarten and Freytag, and indirectly through the latter, also of Vullers and Hengstenberg. Even Ewald, independent though he was, and striving to master for linguistic purposes, the material bequeathed by Arabian grammarians, had to lean upon De Sacy in the development of the main features of his plan.

The times have been when it was customary, if not with Fleischer himself, at any rate with a few of his disciples, to treat somewhat contemptuously the efforts of men like Freytag and Hammer-Purgstall in behalf of Arabic philology. I myself must confess to the youthful folly of having, in my first very imperfect essay, spoken of Hammer in a way which even vivid remembrance of Ahlwardt's Chalaf could not excuse, certainly not justify. Deservedly, I was at once reproved by a more sensible fellow-worker.* Freytag was also judged unkindly, though perhaps not with equal severity. Even the numberless corrections which had to be made in his lexicon, and will of necessity ever continue to be made, cannot alter the fact that it was an eminent performance at the time of its compilation, and still remains an exceedingly useful work. Naturally, neither Hammer nor Freytag, neither Kosegarten nor Vullers can bear comparison with the master mind at Paris. The last three are docile disciples, who praiseworthy for industry, and estimable for attainments, do no more than follow in the footsteps of their master, without reaching him, even in their happiest moments. Hammer, on the other hand, was never more than a highly gifted dilettante, whose desire for novelties stifled the faculty of maturing ideas. His capacity for work was unbounded; its results however laid down in numerous volumes, but apparently solve the vast problems of history and literature. On his bold excursions, he often paved the way to fields hitherto inaccessible, but keenly discovered by him to be worthy of cultivation. It will always remain his distinction that he made it possible for us to gain a bird's-eye view over such fields, and cursory though it was, it is still valuable on all points in which detailed research has not replaced his superficial statements by more reliable data. Hence it is not astonishing that the Vienna Orientalist enjoyed undisputed fame and exerted great influence in the first third of this century. Thus the danger was imminent, that his virtues being inseparable from his personality, his pupils and imitators might after his death seize only upon his weak points and develop them into a radically false and highly dangerous system. It is doubtful whether any of the German representatives of De Sacy would have been able successfully to combat this method. Despite their merits, not one of the investigators named was distinguished

* See H. Derenbourg, *Revue critique*, 1869, No. 35, p. 132.

by that combination of wide knowledge and philological accuracy which had marked De Sacy's work, and which—in case his death occurred as early as was feared,* would have to be the characteristics of a successor, whose influence was to counteract Hammer's. Kosegarten approached this ideal most closely, unless we except Rödiger, who if not totally independent of De Sacy, had at least not been trained in his school. But neither devoted himself exclusively to Arabic-Mohammedan philology; and the same objection, to a still stronger degree, holds of Rückert, whose interests were chiefly poetic. Thus it was Fleischer alone in whom the ideal was fully realized. To him therefore naturally fell the task of placing our science upon the same eminence in Germany that it had occupied under De Sacy in France,—a task rendered difficult by the necessity of guiding it so that it might permanently be rescued from the crooked path into which it might have been forced under Hammer's influence.

It is impossible for me to judge whether Fleischer, at the time of entering upon the duties of his Leipzig professorship, had conceived his mission as clearly as we can now formulate it after its accomplishment. At all events, the two essays with which he introduced himself upon the arena of his future successes seems to bear unequivocal signs that this was his conscious goal. When he was no more than "Professor-elect of Oriental languages at the University of Leipzig," he published, while at Dresden, his translation of Zamachshari's *Golden Necklaces*, with a preface and notes, containing a sharp attack on Hammer's edition and translation of the same text. Almost at the same time he reviewed Habicht's glosses, in which there is surely no lack of grave mistakes. In this last review his tone was the mildest imaginable, and later, even when dealing with bunglers of the worst sort, he never became vehement. If then in opposing Hammer he made use of more violent language, he must have been actuated by serious and far-reaching considerations. In fact, he states them at the beginning of the preface in these words: "If highly esteemed scholars in possession of every facility, at a time when science has reached its manhood, give thoroughly useless work to the world, what should be the attitude of criticism? It is our opinion that its sharpest weapons should be directed against such abuses, and in this case it should combat even such as are really beneath criticism, in order that their becoming contagious may be prevented." The man, comparatively speaking a novice, who thus met a scholar, universally looked upon as the most eminent orientalist in Germany, must have felt the assurance of victory. The contents of his essay justified his bold language, and a still further justification was furnished by his *Dissertatio critica de glossis Habichtianis in quatuor priores tomos MI noctium*, which appeared in the following year (1836), on the occasion of his entering upon the duties of his chair. On account of the minutiæ of mediæval Muslim life described, the

* He died in 1838.

"Arabian Nights," require complete mastery of the whole domain of Arabic-Mohammedan life, for a thorough understanding of all the difficulties that grow out of the language and the subject-matter. Of this mastery the essay testifies abundantly, as it does of the unerring philological tact of the critic, whose emendations by no means are the happy suggestions of an ingenious mind, but rather the results of wide linguistic and historical knowledge, and of intimate acquaintance with the habits of copyists and the manner of transmitting manuscripts.

For obvious reasons, it is not easy—and so far as I am concerned it is at this moment not possible—to trace the impression made by the two essays when first published; but their success shows that it must have been deep and lasting. The same complete mastery of the subject is displayed by Fleischer's next works: *Ali's One Hundred Proverbs* (1837), a description of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts in the *Catalogus Librorum MSS. Bibl. Civit. Lipsiensis* (1838), and the completion of Habicht's edition of the Arabian Nights (vols. IX–XII, 1842–'43). But the character of the subjects treated in these works was not calculated to confer controlling influence upon them. Likewise his edition in 1847 of Mirza Mohammed Ibrahim's *Grammar of the modern Persian Language* (2d edition, 1875), merely strengthened the impression derived from *Ali's Proverbs*, that this scholar had as wide an acquaintance with Persian as with Arabic. Thus, directly or indirectly, it must be due to these two short essays that Fleischer, as early as the fourth decade of this century, was freely acknowledged by all, excepting perhaps the immediate followers of Hammer, as the chief of German orientalists. In fact, from that time on for a period of nearly half a century, he became the chosen guide of all Germans and many foreigners, desirous of thorough disciplining in Arabic Mohammedan philology. The impression created by these two works was so strong, because they are an exemplification of the true philological method for which the Germans, after the death of Reiske, the *vir incomparabilis*, once more had to resort to the Frenchman De Sacy,—a method which is nothing less than the use of common sense, coupled on the one hand with faithful, untiring efforts to attain to the greatest possible completeness and to scrupulous accuracy in the collecting and sifting of the material handed down to us, and forbidding, on the other hand, all arbitrariness, however ingenious, as well as all superficiality, however grandiose. This definition by no means puts an interdict upon cleverness on the part of the philologist thus gifted. It merely provides that cleverness must manifest itself in mastering the details acquired, not in speciously hiding the imperfections of scientific research and then satisfying one's conscience by a perfunctory though minute adherence to a traditional method. That Fleischer realized in himself this ideal of a philologist perhaps best marks his importance in the history of science; his example as well as his precept have made it possible for all to gain a knowledge of the correct method to be used in our department of re-

search. Many of the most prominent scholars of the present day have in other ways arrived at a knowledge of this method, or have been intuitively gifted with it, but its spread to extended circles we owe to Fleischer, and to him alone.

His disinclination to treat philological subjects according to routine methods was shown by Fleischer in his edition of Beidhawi's Coran commentary, which completed his fame, and which, in a way is to be considered the most important work of his life. He, Gottfried Hermann's disciple, who surely knew what elements constitute a "methodical" edition of a work, published this voluminous and difficult text without any variant readings. I have elsewhere* shown what considerations, in my opinion, justly led him to adopt a system unusual even with himself. The character of a Coran commentary is, in every respect, technical. He who would understand and edit it must first have extensive and detailed acquaintance with the contents and technical peculiarities of the theological, juridical, and grammatical system of the Islam. But so enviable a scholar, aided by all available manuscripts and super-commentaries, certainly has the ability in every case to select the correct reading; and superfluous readings serve but to confuse less learned readers. The responsibility incurred by an editor who takes it upon himself to omit customary technicalities is proportionately great. But whoever heard Fleischer himself interpret his own Beidhawi a single time, was forever delivered from all uneasiness on the score of his power to meet such responsibility. This edition is naturally not purged of every human imperfection. Fleischer himself, in a lecture on one occasion, expressed his vexation that after the feminine والحكاية the expression ليست الّا instead of the correct word ليس الّا had escaped him. (*Cf.* Fell's *Index*, p. 67.) But such instances assuredly are not numerous. On another occasion he related that a copy of his book—(I no longer remember how and when)—had been submitted to the Sheikh-ul-Islâm at Constantinople, and that the latter had considered it beneath his dignity to throw even a superficial glance at an ignorant infidel's disfigurement of the classical work of Mohammedan theology. Finally however he had opened it and glanced at a few lines; then, amazed had eagerly continued to read, at last giving expression to his astonishment that, in the Occident, there could exist a man who apparently understood Beidhawi as well as an orthodox doctor. I quote these remarks of Fleischer, which I heard myself, since I should consider it presumption were I to praise his Beidhawi. He only has the privilege of doing this who is so well versed in Muslim theology, that he might on a proper occasion, criticise it. Whether there are—outside of the Orient—a half-dozen scholars

* *Götting. gelehrte. Anzeigen.* 1884, No. 24, p. 961.

who may venture to make this assertion is doubtful; at all events, I do not reckon myself among them.

Aside from a small edition of the *Hermes trismegistus*, written in 1870, on a special occasion, Beidhawi is the last work published by Fleischer without assistance. Even Beidhawi was not complete when it left the hands of the publisher. For years the *Indices* weighed heavily upon his conscientious mind, until finally in 1878, they were brought out by the helpful aid of Fell. With reference to this unusual delay, Fleischer said in the preface with which he introduces his pupil's work: "*Qui me resque meas norunt, eos me ultro excusatum habere scio*," and his meaning was evident to all. During the period while he was busy with the Beidhawi text, the claims made upon him from all sides had increased with his growing fame. These claims were put forth chiefly by three parties: his pupils, his co-laborers, and the community at large. His manner of satisfying them illustrates the most admirable traits in his character: extreme conscientiousness, faithful attention to the slightest details, affability and absolute unselfishness.

His conscientiousness and faithfulness were pre eminently evinced in his academic labors, as I can testify from personal experience in the years 1867 and 1868. He knew Beidhawi thoroughly; daily, at any chance occasion, he excited admiration by his clear explanation of the doctrines of Mohammedan scholasticism, or by his equally correct way of tracing the history of a word and its development in meaning from the Arabic through the Persian to the Turkish,—all this without referring, except in rare instances, to his inter-leaved copy of Freytag, famous on account of its marginal notes, literally covering the text as well as the inter-leaves. Yet he never lectured on Beidhawi without preparation. His students, coming to attend a lecture at his study early in the morning, frequently found him standing by a high desk, the text and a copy of Sheikh Zâde's super commentary lying before him. In his "Arabic Association," difficult passages in various texts were discussed, opportunity was given to gain practice in the reading of manuscripts, etc. But outside of this, he gave instruction, at the period spoken of, only in the writings of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish authors. The texts selected for reading varied, frequently according to the wishes of the students. But the two lectures a week on Beidhawi were inviolable. In these, he himself translated and explained, frequently cross-questioning his hearers, in order to assure himself that they had grasped his meaning and were making good progress. In the remaining four to six hours a week, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish texts were given to the students to translate, their translations being corrected and elucidated by the professor on the spot. In conducting this exercise his talk wandered from topic to topic, so that in looking back it appears that not the reading of the texts was of prime importance, but rather the wealth of information, relating to the subject-matter, chiefly however of a linguistic nature, which he fairly showered

from out of the plenitude of his learning upon the eagerly listening and busily writing members of his class. Aside from the numerous additions to one's knowledge, his apparently irregular and digressive method of instruction possessed the advantage of at once ushering the student into the Mohammedan world of language and ideas, giving him a vivid conception of the wealth and pliability of the Arabic idiom, and most emphatically reminding him at every turn of the necessity of being accurate in the slightest detail. Naturally it was at the same time necessary to pursue private study systematically and unremittingly, and it was pre-supposed as a matter of course. He who could and would work, had to acquire rapidly a knowledge of the languages, and yield with docility to a training in habits of accuracy; the essentials of Arabic, indeed of all philology. The undeniable but doubtless intentional one-sidedness of this method is justified by the necessity of helping the pupils to ground themselves thoroughly in these fundamentals. If I have been correctly informed, Fleischer in earlier years delivered regular courses of lectures, as for instance on the doctrinal theology of the Islam. From this it can be inferred that his later method meant to lay increased stress upon the important and essential points which he had always emphasized. We were charged to acquire Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, and to rid ourselves radically of any tendency to superficiality. Having done that, we were prepared as far as our ability went to do independent and philologically accurate work in whatever special field any one of us might choose. However, even from this point of view, there is one more desideratum, apparently unprovided for in this method, namely, a knowledge of the technical working principles of philology, in any event a highly desirable equipment of the future philologist. But every one had the opportunity of acquiring them while preparing his thesis. For Fleischer's activity as a teacher was by no means at an end when he had appeared in the lecture room eight or ten times a week. His library, his knowledge, his talents were at the disposal of his pupils, and if any one of them in his first attempt at editing a text was perplexed by some difficult passage in the manuscript, he needed but to apply to his ever-obliging teacher to have the difficulty cleared away. Either he might content himself with carrying away the ready explanation or emendation, or if he attended intelligently, he might, in addition, derive the restricted number of principles and tricks of method, which, in fact, can be summed up in the direction to scrutinize carefully the manuscript to be explained and in the observance of the two main injunctions in Lehrs's philological decalogue: "Thou shalt not prostrate thyself before manuscripts," and "Thou shalt not take the name method in vain." Finally, when the time came for the young scholar to leave Leipzig, perhaps soon after receiving his degree, the bond that linked him to Fleischer was by no means severed. Whenever and in whatever way he wished he could apply to Fleischer for a solution of problems and difficulties.

In his kindness of heart he was indefatigable in replying and explaining, often himself correcting proof-sheet upon proof-sheet. Each of us was sure to find in him as long as we lived a firm scientific support. I do not care to mar this remembrance of a teacher's touching unselfishness and faithfulness by questioning whether these characteristics were always appealed to with the reserve rendered doubly necessary by so ample a benevolence. He himself never gave this question a thought. He existed for his pupils as long as he supposed them at all interested in science. Therefore no one called him anything but "the Sheikh;" unless led by the exuberant spirits of youth, we translated the Arabic expression by "the old man" (which after all was indicative of our unbounded respect for him), for this Arabic title of honor conveys an idea of the parental relation existing between the teacher and the pupil, which is assumed as a matter of course in the Mohammedan East.

But he was not *our* "Sheikh" alone. Long before I was permitted to become one of his disciples, he had been acknowledged the "sheikhush shuyûkh," the master of masters. To a certain extent it was natural that he should have come to occupy this rank. His pupils had developed into co-investigators, and they could not well entertain the idea of supplanting him. But great as was their number, there was still no lack of men, who, having been disciples of Ewald, Rödiger, Freytag, and others, might preserve their independence. In a still higher degree this was true of partial contemporaries, such as Dorn and Rödiger. No one will deny that this state of affairs was salutary for our science. Under all circumstances it is baneful for one school, no matter how excellent its principles or its representatives may be, to exercise autocratic sway in a given domain. In some respects it must be one-sided, and one-sidedness is fatal to science. Now, from what has been said of Fleischer as a teacher, it follows that nothing was further removed from his mind than to force his pupils into a narrow-minded course. If nevertheless any one is disposed to harbor this opinion, let him but read Fleischer's preface to Behrnauer's translation of the *Forty Viziers* to learn differently. But as was natural, his disciples at first had to abandon themselves to his guidance. The necessity was constantly arising to refer them to the Arabic grammar, when once they began to do independent work in the preparation of texts, always of a grammatical nature, since such are easiest for a well-trained Arabist. Thus it had to come about that for a time Arabic grammar seemed to thrive almost too luxuriantly in these circles. Since then it has become apparent that the danger was not very great. It must be conceded however that its complete avoidance was greatly due to the efforts of those scholars who remained independent of Fleischer; that is to say, independent of his instruction, not of his influence. It could not be gainsaid; he was the most learned of the learned, the most accurate of the accurate. It is therefore not remarkable that the recognition of his scientific superiority, readily yielded by all prominent scholars, with

one or two exceptions, gradually led to the establishment of personal relations, in which he always gave more than he received. His co-laborers in Germany, as well as in more than one foreign land, by degrees grew accustomed to ask his advice, claim his help, which he granted to strangers as freely as to his own pupils. Thus it happened that for many a year no Arabic text of any importance was printed in Germany without owing to him considerable improvements, and likewise more than one valuable work by foreign Arabists has received similar aid. Sometimes he revised the proof-sheets as they were printed; sometimes, after the appearance of single volumes, he arranged the notes, taken during its careful perusal, so that they might profitably be used in appendices, possibly to be added. There is quite a library of Arabic writings, in the building up of which he has thus participated. Here are some of the important works, selected at hap-hazard: Amari's *Bibliotheca Arabo-Sicula*, Juynboll's *Abulmahâsin*, the *Makkari*, Tornberg's *Ibn el-Athîr*, Wustenfeld's *Jacût*, Flügel's *Fihrist*, Wright's *Kâmil*, de Goeje's *Bibliotheca Geographorum*, Jahn's *Ibn Ya'ish*. This critical work was naturally accompanied by an extensive correspondence, which took the more time as it was conducted with an almost exaggerated conscientiousness. But in no other way could these numberless connections have been maintained so regularly and so steadfastly.

As Oriental studies advanced in Germany the necessity of establishing closer connections between the representatives of the different departments was keenly felt early in the third decade of this century. To effect a union of this kind Ewald, Kosegarten, Rödiger, Rückert, and some others established, in 1837, the *Journal for the Science of the Orient* (*Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*). From 1838, the philologists' conventions offered place and opportunity for personal intercourse between men in all departments of Oriental research. Thus Rödiger was but giving shape to an idea that had long been entertained when he proposed on the occasion of a visit, in September, 1843, at Fleischer's house, where Pott, Olshausen, von der Gabelentz, and Brockhaus were also present, that German orientalists, as a body, should hold sessions annually in connection with the conventions of philologists. As is well known, this plan was executed in 1844, at the Dresden meeting. The consultations held there resulted in the formation, at next year's meeting, on October 2, 1845, at Darmstadt, of a German Oriental Society, modelled after the Société Asiatique and the Royal Asiatic Society. The Journal of the new society absorbed, in 1847, the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*. From the first, Fleischer displayed zealous interest in the plan. The Dresden council was held under his presidency, and the first draught of the constitution issued from his pen. His certificate of membership was the first conferred, and, up to the time of his resignation from the governing body, in 1880, it may be said, without disparagement to many faithful and deserving men, that he was the soul of the association, unselfishly, as always, devoting

his best powers to the common good. His help was given wherever it was needed; he served as editor of the Journal, and again as chronicler of the year's work; he was called upon to pass judgment on works that were to be published under the auspices of the society, and to correct them; and sometimes he had to act as mediator between opposing parties that had sprung up within the society. The society thus became dear to his heart, as does a child that has been raised with care and trouble to man's estate. Nothing (unless it were a falsehood) vexed him so much as an injury done the society, or failure to fulfill punctually the duties imposed by membership. While occupying the position in the governing board of executive in matters relating to the library, he took upon himself the unpleasant task of making a quarterly list of all books and pamphlets that had been sent to him, and inclosing it in the chest of books forwarded to the librarian at Halle. Later, when direct communications between the library and the correspondents of the society were established, this work was no longer necessary. Up to that time, while I was librarian of the society, many a list of that kind passed from his hand into mine. I do not remember ever to have found an error in a single one; but I know that I often wished that he would not waste precious time on unimportant work, for which he might have found dozens of willing hands near him. But he would have eyed with suspicion the man who would suggest that he should transfer to others what he considered his own duty. Undoubtedly he was right, for the society would never have turned out to be such as it is if he had not had so conscientious a conception of duty. He was repaid by the pleasure of seeing it grow and thrive; soon it could fitly range itself by the side of older associations abroad; and among the learned bodies of Germany it occupied a respected position. On one occasion, to be sure, this position caused him much unpleasantness, namely when the directors had to advise the Prussian Government as to the purchase of the Moabite antiquities, which subsequently proved spurious. This is not the place and nowhere is it concern of mine to raise anew the dust under which this unfortunate affair has finally been buried. The proper conception of the province of a business committee is expressed in a resolution, afterwards adopted by the general convention of the German Oriental Society: "In consequence of the position assigned by the constitution to the board of directors of the society, any opinion published by them on scientific and more particularly on disputed points, cannot be construed to express the opinion of the society."* Fleischer may have permitted a fatal mistake to be made, but he afterwards generously assumed more of the responsibility than was necessary.

Surely no one who once more passes in review his extensive and varied work, even in the incomplete survey that I have just made, can find reason to doubt the truth of what Fleischer further says in the

* *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*, vol. xxxi, p. xv.

above quoted passage from his preface to Fell's *Indices*: "*Ceteris adsevero otium mihi et vires defuisse, non voluntatem et studium.*" Certainly then it was not possible for him to find leisure for the preparation and execution of comprehensive works embodying the results of independent research. The translation of the Coran, the work of many years, was left uncompleted. However, not all his powers were absorbed by his efforts in behalf of his pupils, his colleagues, and the learned world in general. He devoted every leisure moment to his appointed task of maintaining Arabic-Mohammedan philology upon the eminence to which De Sacy had raised it, and if possible of elevating it still higher. He diligently continued up to the last moment the critical work that had opened new paths to science upon his first appearance. For a long time he wrote reviews of new books in the *Hallische Litteraturzeitung*, in Gersdorf's *Repertorium* and in other journals, but afterwards exclusively in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. For the readers of the *Beiträge*, special mention may be made of his detailed notices of the re modelled edition of Rückert's *Poetics and Rhetoric of the Persians*, and of Bacher's edition of Sa'di's short poems, both republished in the third volume of his *Minor Works*. Besides, he contributed extensively to the improvement of the various editions of Arabic texts, especially of Makkari and Abulmahâsin, and wrote a number of short articles on chance topics connected with Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature, history, and archæology, as they were suggested to him by hints in his correspondence, in his official work for the German Oriental Society, etc. Two great series, by far the most important in a mass of highly instructive material, must be noted: the celebrated contributions (*Beiträge*) to De Sacy's *Grammaire Arabe*, and those to Dozy's *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes.*

"*Grammatici Arabes utilissimi nobis (sunt enim thesauri formarum totius que antiquitatis promi condi)*" was the opinion of Ewald.* It is perhaps De Sacy's greatest distinction that he put Arabic philology upon this basis, and no less deserving of praise is Fleischer for having continued and supplemented this work in a spirit of modesty and life-long devotion to his beloved teacher, aided by the superior knowledge which he had learned how to acquire in the school of De Sacy. Those endowed with unusual talent, and furnished besides with a peculiar gift for the Arabic language, may succeed in understanding Arabic, and in avoiding all the hidden snares in the characters the vocabulary and the syntax, laid for the guileless reader by this most treacherous of all languages with which I am acquainted. But the average scholar is lost, that is to say sinks back upon a lamentably low stage of philological development, unless he masters thoroughly his De Sacy with Fleischer's additions. That diligent and willing students are no longer exposed to this danger of retrograding we owe to "the old man." And the place filled in its time by the worn, interleaved Freytag, or that filled in the domain of

* *Gramm. crit. ling. Ar.*, I, p. iv.

grammar by De Sacy with the "*Beiträge*," is occupied, on the field of lexicography, by Dozy's *Supplément*, enriched by Fleischer's corrections and additions. His "Minor Works," covering, together with the others mentioned, 2225 pages, are a legacy, the conscientious use of which will, for a long time, continue to be the prime duty of every scientific Arabist.

We should use it however not only conscientiously, but also with the most grateful remembrance. We should always bear in mind that Fleischer, in order to become for his pupils and co-laborers what he was to them, refrained from working for himself except by working for others, and this at a time when his powers were at their height and his comprehensive learning in its ripest state.

Possibly many a one has shared the feeling of a prominent and clever co-laborer of mine, who said to me some years ago that it vexed him to think that Fleischer, with his magnificent learning and ability, was deserting from the solution of the highest problems. I can not agree with my nameless friend. Diverse gifts—one mind. Some, venturing fearlessly abroad, are permitted to discover new domains; others secure law and order at home. Not the one by itself, nor the other is the desideratum. The one cannot stand without the other. When Fleischer came upon the stage we stood in need of law and order, which he secured. Now, let the venturesome go forth upon voyages of discovery; the less talented will still do well to remain at home and watch lest law and order be undermined. Certainly it would have been a great achievement if, for instance, our sheikh had built up the edifice of Islamic doctrines for us. But has he not done better in sharpening tools for many generations of workers, so that now they may themselves build, not so quickly and not so high, but on a broad base and with many wings?

"Let me say briefly that from my early youth I have dimly felt the desire and hope to cultivate myself, my whole self, such as it is," writes Wilhelm Meister to his wise friend Werner. Man's duty with regard to his own gifts has never been expressed more pertinently. Fleischer's was a sagacious, acute, and sensible mind. He in nowise sympathized with what is mystic and ambiguous. A critic by nature, he exercised his critical faculties not only upon others, but also and chiefly upon himself. Besides, he was faithful to duty, a lover of truth, benevolent, humbly self-sacrificing, and single-minded. Not one of these natural traits did he fail to cultivate conscientiously, nor did he ever attempt to lay false claims to virtues which he did not possess. A man of this kind could not fail to see that only by means of self-restraint can one succeed in perfectly cultivating one's own nature. In no respect,—neither in his views, nor in his studies,—was he one-sided; but he knew accurately wherein his strength lay, and was too sensible to sin against the proverb: "*Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint.*" "*Il ne faut pas courir deux lièvres à la fois*," he once wrote to me,—(he often delighted in using

the French language, which he had mastered perfectly), and according to this principle he consistently arranged his scientific career. In his preface to the *Golden Necklaces* he says clearly and decidedly: "In Arabic research neither good will, nor diligence, nor penetration of mind, nor ingenuity, nor outside philological attainments, nor anything in the world, can relieve one from the necessity of modestly, faithfully, and diligently studying with the Arabic philologists,—and here in Europe, above all with our master De Sacy; however, I do not mean to imply that Ewald and his compeers will not in time succeed in summarizing the superabundant material of Arabic philology in a more fitting and convenient form, as well as in explaining many facts in a more scientific way." The justification for Ewald's philological methods does not escape his notice, as Ewald in turn admits that the Arabian grammarians are the *promi condi totius antiquitatis*. But Fleischer avowedly limits himself to the purely philological side of the task, for *il ne faut pas courir deux liévres á la fois*. Only once did he deviate from this rule, and then it was done in order to venture upon a neighboring domain that could not well be avoided, that of general Semitic etymology: He that wishes to cast a stone at him on this account may do so after consulting St. John viii, 7. To this wise self-restraint, among other things, he owes his preeminence upon that field of philological research which was chosen by him, or which (if you will) naturally fell to his share. At all events it is hard to believe that any other field would have given the same scope to his natural abilities. The undeviating conformity to law that characterizes the structure of the Arabic language and its perspicuity naturally appeal to him, as on the other hand its boundless wealth and apparent complexity of linguistic phenomena offered welcome problems for his ingenuity to solve. He was thus, by right of birth, the expounder of the Arabic poets and writers, whose peculiarities are analogous to those of their language. This partial affinity (for in other respects, he was a true German with very un-Arabian feelings), together with his linguistic attainments and large information, permitted him to reach the incomparable skill and certainty in the criticism of Arabic texts which for the time at least did more than anything else to shed luster upon his name. Theoretically indeed there is no difference between the proper philological treatment of a Greek or Latin and an Arabic or Persian text. But many external circumstances connected with Mohammedan literature, such as the relatively short period intervening between the original writer and the manuscripts to be studied, the peculiarities of Arabic characters, etc., cause less stress to be put in our specialty upon the *recensio*, if I may be permitted to use technical terms. In some cases the *recensio* is the most essential part of the work; in most however it is very unimportant. With us it is the *emendatio* that taxes the critical faculties to the utmost. Similarly, ours differs from classical philology, inasmuch as conjectures with us are usually either entirely correct or altogether incorrect rarely—*probabilis*. Hence it may be said that, aside

from mere copyists' blunders, it is easier to make conjectures in classical philology, but, on the other hand *ceteris paribus* it is easier for us to make correct conjectures or emendations. For both reasons we are not justified in resting satisfied with the mere *recensio*, as our Græco-Roman philologians may sometimes do. It follows that a man like Fleischer may not be disposed of by praising him as the lucky possessor of a talent for conjecturing, and then casting him into the great lumber-room, where the superannuated philologists' apparatus is stored. True, he is the author of thousands of conjectural corrections, but at least two-thirds of his conjectures, if this measure of worth be applicable, are emendations. Whoever admits this, will thereby agree with me in saying that self-forgetful work limited by wise self-restraint, and undertaken with a definite aim in view, is as a matter of course and almost in opposition to the wishes of its author, rewarded with the prize.

It is time to conclude. Fleischer's prominent position in the history of our science is due to these circumstances; by precept and example he made a home in Germany for the scientific study of Arabic Mohammedan philology; he trained generations of scholars with this purpose in view; he similarly influenced his co-laborers in Germany and abroad; he doubled the sum total of all the results reached by De Sacy in the special field of Arabic language and literature, and by his help the work of his contemporaries was raised to the eminence occupied by his own. There was no lack of prominent scholars in his own department, nor of such as took up and supplemented his work outside of the limits he himself had drawn. Still he and no other can be called the true heir and successor of De Sacy. In knowledge and ability he excelled his great teacher. But he himself would have administered a sharp reproof to him who might venture to rank him above his master, in scientific matters: "Honor be to him who leads the way." الفضل للمتقدم

The unstinted recognition yielded to the great scholar on all sides was commensurate with his deserts. The most prominent Orientalists of Germany and others of foreign countries readily acknowledged that his was unequalled knowledge and ability; one learned society after another conferred upon him honorary membership, and to several Saxon orders and the Turkish Medjidié were added the two highest scientific distinctions in the giving of Germany,—the Bavarian order of Maximilian and the Prussian *pour le mérite*. For a long time it seemed as though age itself could not impair the octogenarian's vigor nor destroy his love of work. However, in the spring of 1884, there appeared the first symptoms of an abdominal disorder, which gradually grew. But whoever saw him when he was not troubled with pain, scarcely noticed any change in his appearance,—none whatever in his manner. On October 19, 1885, I enjoyed the privilege of participating with many others in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his official connection with the university, and on October 4, 1886, when I again visited him during his stay at

Neu-Schönefeld, the entry in my diary reads: "Fleischer as bright as ever." But in 1886, he was compelled to avail himself of the permission granted him, on the occasion of his jubilee celebration, to omit the lectures of the summer session, and the physician's orders were constantly limiting the amount of work he did. When again I visited him at Leipzig in October 7, 1887, I felt that I should have to bid him an eternal farewell. In spite of his increasing debility he began a course of lectures for the winter session, and continued them until November 17. But on November 18 he took to his bed, never again to leave it. He bore the pain entailed by his disease with admirable patience; no complaint ever crossed his lips, until on February 10, 1888, a short while before completing his eighty-seventh year, death released him from his suffering.

The prominent features of Fleischer's character were truthfulness, conscientiousness, unselfishness, and punctuality. I was never able to decide how much he owed to nature, how much to the strict self-discipline exercised in early years. But whatever he had acquired by habit had come to be a part of his being. He became indignant nay wrathful, the kindliness that marked his features and sprung from good nature in the best meaning of the word, seemed to leave him,—when he met with falsehood, carelessness, or lack of punctuality. As long as there were no evidences of want of truth on the part of others, he was unsuspicious, sometimes too much so; but whoever shocked his delicate sense of justice, had good cause to fear his anger. Yet there was not a trace of dogmatism in his nature. He may in some instances have chanced to form an incorrect judgment of certain people, but he took the first opportunity to change it most willingly in their favor, unless weighty reasons existed for the contrary. All that he thought and did was characterized by objectivity, pure and simple. In scientific debates he demanded that his conclusions be tested impartially, and on the other hand he accepted instruction from the youngest of his pupils, if he had chanced to find something that had escaped the notice of "the sheikh." His polemics were never of a personal nature except when Ewald accused him, in a manner that even now impairs the reputation of this great man of "being actuated by sordid impulses in science." In a published "statement addressed to Prof. Dr. Ewald of Göttingen," he expresses in plain, though moderate terms, his just indignation. His misunderstanding with Dozy, whom Fleischer had unintentionally offended, was cleared up in a way that reflects credit upon both scholars. He was conscious of his abilities and his achievements, but never boasted of them. To all work done by others, in his or their department, he gladly yielded recognition. Unhesitatingly he subordinated himself in every respect to De Sacy, and to Lane's knowledge of the Arabic, as (in his opinion) superior to his own. He was never ambitious of empty honors, he never sought to assert himself.

What was called Fleischer's school, can scarcely be said any longer to exist as such. Arabic studies, the preponderance of which formed the most distinguishing mark of its unity, have been curtailed in Germany. A cruel fate has prematurely removed the very best philologists of Fleischer's school: Ralfs, Loth, Spitta, and, furthermore Kosut and Huber. Some of us have struck out on new paths; general interest has been diverted to Assyriological research and to comparative philology. The leadership in the Arabic domain is about to pass over to the Dutch school. But it matters not what we do, if only we emulate the example of "our sheikh," and do disinterested, honest, diligent, conscientious, and modest work, in whatever is within the reach of our limited ability.

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